

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 14865 170809Z

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6066

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 14865

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR VS SG

SUBJECT: GVN BREAKING RELATIONS WITH SENEGAL

1. BUI DIEM, FORMER GVN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, TOLD MINPOL AUGUST 16 THAT HE WAS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE GVN DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH SENEGAL BECAUSE OF SENEGAL'S RECOGNITION OF THE PRG. DIEM SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH THE GVN CHARGE IN SENEGAL WHO HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE WORKING LEVELS IN THE SENGALIAN GOVERNMENT WERE NOT HAPPY WITH THE DECISION TO RECOGNIZE THE PRG AND THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE SENGALIAN GOVERNMENT TO RECEIVE A PRG EMBASSY OR SEND A SENGALIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE PRG AREA. DIEM HAD TAKEN AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO PROPOSE TO PRESIDENT THAT THE GVN NOT BREAK RELATIONS SO LONG AS NO EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WITH THE PRG WAS INVOLVED. HE THOUGHT THAT HE HAD THIEU'S AGREEMENT TO THIS PROPOSITION BUT WAS DISMAYED WHEN A FEW DAYS LATER THIEU, PERSUADED BY ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER DUC, DECIDED TO BREAK WITH SENEGAL AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

2. DIEM REPEATED WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BEFORE: THAT THE PRC HAD INDUCED RECOGNITION OF THE PRG. ACCORDING TO DIEM THE CHINESE OFFERED TO BUILD A DAM AND THIS WAS JUST TOO ATTRACTIVE AN OFFER FOR SENGAL TO RESIST EVEN THOUGH PART OF THE PRICE WAS RECOGNITION OF THE PRG.

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 14865 170809Z

3. FROM THE WAY DIEM SPOKE IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT HE AND DUC

DIFFER SHARPLY ON HOW THE GVN SHOULD ACT IN SUCH CASES. DIEM NOTED THAT DUC WAS AN EXCELLENT LAWYER AND THAT HIS LEGAL POINTS WERE WELL MADE, BUT, HE SAID, DIPLOMACY HAS TO WORK IN THE "REAL WORLD". HE THOUGHT DUC'S "LEGALISTIC" APPROACH TO THE PRG QUESTION, IF CARRIED TOO FAR, COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS REVERSES FOR THE GVN. HE AGREED WITH OUR COMMENT THAT THE PRECEDENT SET IN SENEGAL COULD HAVE VERY UNHAPPY CONSEQUENCES WHEN DIPLOMATIC CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE PRG ARISE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. DIEM IS CLEARLY ALIGNED AT THE PRESENT TIME WITH NHA. HE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD PLACED NHA IN OVERALL CHARGE OF THE GVN EFFORT TO UPHOLD ITS CAUSE AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES BUT THAT NHA HAD TOO MANY OTHER THINGS TO DO AND HAD ASKED HIM (DIEM) TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE CAMPAIGN'S DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT. HE OBSERVED THAT DUC IS NO LONGER DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WORKING LEVEL WAS FUNCTIONING TO "SUPPORT" HIS AND NHA'S EFFORT. DIEM ALSO REPEATED WHAT HE TOLD AMBASSADOR MARTIN THE OTHER DAY, THAT DUC WOULD NOT BE STAYING AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AFTER AUGUST 27 BUT WOULD BE GOING AS AMBASSADOR TO BRUSSELS.

MARTIN

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